



**CONNECT**  
CHURCH

MINISTRY

**PLAN**

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI | [CONNECTCOLUMBIA.NET](http://CONNECTCOLUMBIA.NET) | BOB & DEANNA NILGES, LEAD PASTORS



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**3** INTRODUCTION

**8** COMMUNITY & DEMOGRAPHICS

**11** SYSTEMS

**17** MARKETING & AWARENESS

**20** BUDGET & FUNDRAISING

**23** MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

# INTRODUCTION

Connecting people  
to Jesus, to others,  
and to **GOD'S PURPOSE**  
for their lives.



CONNECT  
CHURCH



## THE DREAM TO PLANT A CHURCH

A

t the start of 2025, after much prayer, the Holy Spirit stirred our hearts with a bold and unexpected dream: to plant a life-giving church in Columbia, Missouri.

This wasn't just an idea—it was a deep burden to reach people that are far from God. We kept thinking—if only we could do more. More to build the Kingdom. More to reach the lost, the hurting, the ones ready to give up on life. These are the people God placed on our hearts.

After serving for 20 years as staff pastors in our local church, we were deeply grateful for how God had used us in ministry and how He had blessed our family tremendously. But we began to sense that He was calling us to step out in faith—to create a new space where people can encounter Jesus' love, find real community, and discover their purpose.

That dream became Connect Church—a church where anyone can come as they are, and connect with the life-changing power of Jesus. Our mission is simple: connect people to Jesus, to others, and to God's purpose for their lives.

Although Columbia is home to many churches, we know that Jesus said the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. He is sending us to serve alongside other laborers in Columbia's mission field. With a population of around 130,000, Columbia is one of the fastest-growing mission fields in Missouri. The city is home to three universities and nearly 40,000 students, including international students from 113 countries. With over 95,000 people within a five-mile radius of Columbia reporting no religious affiliation, our hearts burn to reach them with the gospel.

We're already familiar with Columbia. I attended the University of Missouri as a student, and Deanna worked in the city for many years. With God's help and the support of people like you, we're stepping out to build a church that will take new ground for His Kingdom

We are planning to launch Connect Church in March, 2026.

Bob Nilges





## WHO WE ARE

### BOB & DEANNA NILGES

Bob and Deanna Nilges have been married for 26 years and are the proud parents of three amazing children: Kylee (24), Hudson (24), and Hannah (21). They have served in full-time ministry for over two decades, taking on various roles—including youth, young adult, men's, and women's ministries. Even after all these years, their passion for ministry remains as strong as ever.

Bob enjoys sporting events and outdoor adventures like boating, fishing, and off-roading in his trusty 4x4 Tacoma—which has nearly 300,000 miles on it! He leads with a true pastor's heart, always focusing his attention and conversations on others so they feel seen, heard, and loved. Known for his humor and warm laughter, he makes everyone feel like a longtime friend. Above all, he is passionate about reading and teaching the Word of God.

Deanna loves meeting new people and gathering women for coffee and conversation—she truly never meets a stranger. She often jokes that her primary ministry title is 'The Gatherer of People.' Deanna is a strong, gifted leader in women's ministry with a passion for creating a community where Christian women can encounter both family and Jesus. Her warm, welcoming spirit is contagious and draws many to her ministry events.

Together, Bob and Deanna are committed to sharing the gospel with those who don't yet know Jesus. Their deep desire is for people not only to feel seen by them, but to come to know that God sees and loves them. Serving others is their joy, and nothing excites them more than witnessing lives transformed by a genuine encounter with Jesus.

They are thrilled that God has called them to reach the people of Columbia, Missouri, and they look forward with great anticipation to launching Connect Church.





# WHY PLANT ANOTHER CHURCH?

## 1. CHURCH PLANTS SUPPORT THE GREAT COMMISSION

**Matthew 28:19-20** – “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Planting Connect Church is our response to Jesus’ call in the Great Commission. We believe the mission of the Church is not complete until every person has heard the Gospel and has the opportunity to become a disciple of Jesus. Connect Church will be a Jesus-centered community, committed to sharing the Gospel and making disciples in our neighborhoods, city, and beyond.

## 2. CHURCH PLANTS MULTIPLY KINGDOM WORKERS

**Matthew 9:37-38** – “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more.”

Every new church raises up new leaders, volunteers, and disciple-makers. Planting Connect Church will equip more people to serve, share the Gospel, and advance God’s mission in our world.

## 3. CHURCH PLANTS GROW THE KINGDOM OF GOD

**Acts 2:47** – “...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

*“The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.”*  
– C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*.



## OUR MISSION

To do whatever it takes to **CONNECT** people to Christ, His community and His calling.

- **CONNECT PEOPLE TO CHRIST**

**2 Corinthians 5:17** – “Therefore, If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!”

- **CONNECT PEOPLE TO COMMUNITY**

**Hebrews 10:24-25** – “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

- **CONNECT PEOPLE TO CALLING**

**Ephesians 2:10** – “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”



## OUR VALUES

### 1. JESUS

Jesus is the center of everything – our message, our mission, and our model for life.

### 2. LOVE

We love God wholeheartedly and our neighbors as ourselves.

### 3. THE BIBLE

We value the Bible as the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God.

### 4. GREAT COMMISSION

We are committed to sharing the Gospel everywhere so that all may know Jesus.

### 5. PRAYER

Prayer connects us to God and empowers our mission.

### 6. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit provides us guidance, power, and transformation in every area of life and ministry.

### 7. WORSHIP

We worship God through our service, generosity, praise, prayer, and everyday life.

### 8. COMMUNITY

Community is where people are known, loved and encouraged in Christ.

### 9. NEXT GENERATION

The next generation is not just the church of tomorrow – they are the leaders of today.

# COMMUNITY & DEMOGRAPHICS



CONNECT



# COLUMBIA, MO



Columbia is located in Boone County, right in the heart of Missouri. Columbia is home to 130,900 residents, making it the fourth-largest city in Missouri. Columbia has grown about 40% since 2000, making it the fastest-growing large city in Missouri. This city is known for its educational and medical institutions. Columbia is home to three major universities with nearly 40,000 students, including international students from 113 countries.

Columbia's rapid growth has brought with it a wide range of spiritual, emotional, and practical needs. Here's how we plan to serve:

According to census data, over 95,000 people within a five-mile radius of Columbia report having no religious affiliation. Our church will coordinate outreach events designed to connect with the unchurched.

The 2023 Columbia Community Health Assessment reveals a growing need for mental health resources. Our church will offer prayer-focused support groups that nurture emotional healing, spiritual growth and encounters with the peace of God.

Columbia's young adult population is one of its most open mission fields. With over a decade of experience ministering to 18–30-year-olds, we are equipped to meet their spiritual, emotional, and relational needs. We also plan to partner with local Chi Alpha leaders to strengthen our presence and expand our reach on campus.

Many youths lack access to mentorship and academic support. We plan to partner with after-school programs, and offer tutoring, and relational discipleship to invest in the next generation.

With a major VA hospital and university health system nearby, our church will offer hospital visits, pastoral care, and spiritual encouragement to patients and families who are disconnected from a faith community.

We believe God is calling us to plant deep roots in Columbia—serving not only those within our church but also pastoring the broader community. Our desire is to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

## LOCATION

We are currently looking for a location within the city. One of the options we're exploring is the Regal Columbia Theatre at 2800 Goodwin Pointe. We've been in talks with the team there, and it could be a great fit for us. It's right at the intersection of Highway 63 and Stadium Boulevard—a spot a lot of people in the community already know. There's plenty of parking, and it has multiple rooms we could use for our kids' ministries. We're also checking out a few other possibilities, like local schools and nearby retail centers. Our hope is to lock in a location by February 2026.



# SYSTEMS



At Connect Church, we want every first-time guest to feel welcome, valued, and eager to return. From arrival to departure, our goal is to create a smooth, uplifting, and memorable experience that makes them think, “We have to come back next week!”

## WELCOME EXPERIENCE

### **Parking Lot Team**

Bold signage marks our lot entrance. Friendly volunteers greet guests with a smile and direct them where to park and how to get to the entrance.

### **First-Time Guest Tent**

Visible and consistently highlighted, this tent is staffed with team members who gather guest info, offer prayer, and hand out welcome gift bags.

### **First-Time Guest Hosts**

Hosts guide guests through the experience—from checking in kids to finding the auditorium—and provide a contact card so guests can reach out with questions or needs during service.

### **Lobby Greeters**

Greeters warmly welcome all guests and personally escort them to their destination. No pointing—just personal hospitality.

### **Clear Signage**

Easy-to-read signage directs guests to key areas like kids’ check-in, the auditorium, restrooms, café, and info table.

### **Connect Info Table**

A one-stop spot for learning about Connect Church, Growth Track, small groups, and upcoming events.

### **Café**

Free coffee, drinks, donuts, and snacks help create a warm, relaxed atmosphere for everyone.

## FOLLOW-UP EXPERIENCE

Every first-time guest will receive:

1. A handwritten note mailed the same day by our guest team.
2. A personal text or call from the lead pastor thanking them and inviting them to Party with the Pastor—a monthly meal where guests meet the pastor and team in a relaxed, personal setting.

At Connect Church, we want every person to grow in their relationship with Jesus. Growth happens through intentional discipleship, authentic community, and discovering your God-given purpose.

We create opportunities for this growth by directing them through:

- **Growth Track** – a three-week journey to help people connect with the church, their purpose, and a serve team.
- **Sunday Services** – Spirit-led services, Bible based sermons, and prayer and praise-filled worship services.
- **Small Groups** – some centered on the Bible, others based on Sunday messages or shared interests.
- **Bible Reading Plans** – plans that encourage regular times in the Bible.
- **Leadership Development** – train people to lead and give them real opportunities to disciple others.

## GROWTH TRACK OVERVIEW

These sessions happen right after Sunday services and are designed to be welcoming, practical, and inspiring.

### Week 1 – Connect to the Church

- Learn who we are, what we believe, and where we're headed.
- Get introduced to ministries, small groups, serve teams, and upcoming events.

### Week 2 – Connect to Your Purpose

- Discover your spiritual gifts and how God wired you.
- Connect with your calling—both in church and in life.
- Learn spiritual habits like prayer, reading the Bible, worship, and being part of a church family.

### Week 3 – Connect to a Team

- Explore what servant leadership looks like.
- Find a serve team that matches your gifts, interests, and availability.
- Get equipped to make a difference.

At Connect Church, we're building a culture of second-mile servants—people who joyfully go above and beyond, both inside the church and out in the community. Serving isn't something we have to do; it's something we get to do. We believe that when people serve, they move from being spectators to active participants in God's mission. Serving doesn't just make a difference in others—it transforms the servant too. We'll provide a variety of opportunities for people to jump in and make a difference through Serve Teams. These teams will help turn belief into action and faith into fruit.

### **Our Serve Teams Include:**

**Parking Team** – Create a great first impression before guests even reach the front doors.

**Worship Team** – Lead our church family into the presence of God through music.

**Greeters/Hosts Team** – Make people feel seen, welcomed, and at home.

**First-Time Guest Team** – Give extra love and attention to our first-time visitors.

**Prayer Team** – Cover our services and people in prayer before, during, and after.

**Production Team** – Support worship and preaching through sound, slides, and lights.

**Café Team** – Fuel conversations and community with coffee and hospitality.

**Connect Kids Team** – Invest in the next generation with love, fun, and the gospel.

**Safety Team** – Help keep our environments safe and secure for all ages.

**Social Media Team** – Tell the story of what God's doing at Connect online.

**Media Team** – Capture, edit, and share moments that matter through video and photos.

**Setup/Teardown Team** – Make ministry possible by setting up and tearing down with excellence.

At Connect Church, we're building a culture of evangelism—locally through outreach and globally through missions. From day one, our vision has been clear: we're a church plant committed to planting more churches. We exist to advance the Kingdom of God.

We take Jesus's Great Commission seriously:

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel."

That's why we'll teach, train, encourage, and equip people to reach others for Jesus—at work, on campus, in neighborhoods, and across the globe.

We believe every believer is a missionary. That's why we encourage our people to always be "ready"—invite cards in hand, hearts prepared to share their faith. As Jesus said in Matthew 9:38, "Ask the Lord of the harvest... to send out workers." At Connect Church, we see ourselves as part of that sent group of workers, living on mission wherever we go.

## Our Plan to Make Jesus Known:

### 1. Plant More Churches

We're under the mentorship of two church planting networks—Reach Network and Church Multiplication Network—and plan to multiply through new churches.

### 2. Give Generously to Missions

We commit to giving 10% of Connect Church's income to support local, U.S., and global missions, missionaries, and church planters.

### 3. Partner with Chi Alpha

We'll support Chi Alpha directors at Mizzou, Columbia College, and Stephens College as they reach over 40,000 students from 113 nations.

### 4. Serve Our Local Community

We'll partner with local service projects—clean-up efforts, feeding the homeless, and meeting practical needs in our city.

### 5. Send Short-Term Mission Teams

We'll coordinate U.S. and global short-term missions trips that help people experience and share the gospel firsthand.

Our Sunday worship services are thoughtfully prepared to create the best possible environment for people to encounter Jesus and experience real life change. At the same time, we make space for the Holy Spirit to lead and move freely.

We believe the Holy Spirit has something specific and supernatural for each person every week. Our goal is for people to leave every service encouraged, equipped, enlightened, confident, and transformed—ready to walk out their faith in the week ahead.

### **We'll create this kind of atmosphere through:**

- **Pre-Service Prayer** – 30 minutes before service, our prayer team will pray over every seat, including the Kids Ministry areas.
- **Jesus at the Center** – Every service will keep Jesus and the gospel as the main focus.
- **Spirit-Led Moments** – We welcome the gifts of the Holy Spirit and make room for Him to minister to individuals and to the church as a whole.
- **Personal Prayer Opportunities** – Time will be given during services for people to receive prayer for personal needs.
- **Response Time** – Every gathering will include a moment to respond to what God is saying and doing.
- **Salvation Invitation** – Every service will include a clear and heartfelt opportunity for unbelievers to receive Jesus.
- **Technology + Excellence** – We'll use contemporary audio, visual, and lighting techniques to communicate the gospel with excellence.
- **Dynamic Worship** – Our worship will be Spirit-filled, passionate, and uplifting.
- **Biblical Preaching** – Messages will be practical, challenging, encouraging, and rooted in Scripture.
- **Generosity** – Worshipers will have the opportunity to give financially as an act of worship.
- **Sacraments & Celebrations** – Water baptisms, communion, and child dedications will be regular and meaningful parts of our worship experience.



# MARKETING & AWARENESS



CON  
NECT  
CHURCH



# MARKETING & AWARENESS

Our goal is to reach as many people as possible before launch and build a large, vibrant launch team. A strong launch team means a healthy “birth weight” for our church—setting us up to grow strong from day one.

Here’s our plan to make Connect Church known in Columbia:

## BRANDING & DIGITAL PRESENCE

- We’ve secured the domain name connectcolumbia.net.
- We’ve created our Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- In April of 2025, it was announced through Reach Network’s website and social media that Bob & Deanna Nilges would be planting Connect Church in Columbia, Missouri.
- We’ve secured a local graphic designer to create our church logo with variations for multiple uses, invite cards, giving cards, connection cards, business cards, t-shirt designs, hat designs, tablecloth covers, banners, flags, and sidewalk signage.
- We’re working on a website to communicate vision, awareness and start fundraising.
- A Google Workspace account was also secured.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Serve specific neighborhoods and meet practical needs.
- Participate in city events, activities, and public gatherings.
- Host family-friendly parties throughout the city (especially for kids).
- Serve as substitute teachers and join local chaplain/hospice ministries.
- Join local business networking groups and community Bible studies

## INTEREST PARTIES

- We’ll host five Interest Parties leading up to launch:
  - 1 in November, 1 in December, 2 in January, 1 final gathering in February
- Each party will include food, a fun activity, and a 10–15 minute vision cast.
- The goal: connect relationally and inspire people to join the launch team or commit to the church

## SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

- We'll use Facebook and Instagram as low-cost, high-impact tools to reach our city.
- Promote all major events, especially interest parties and the official launch.
- Create consistent, compelling content that highlights our story, our values, and what makes Connect Church unique.

## INVITE CARD CULTURE

- Print invite cards for everything: interest parties, launch Sunday, sermon series, and big events.
- It starts with leadership: I'll lead by example—posting pictures, telling stories, and modeling invitation culture.
- The goal: make inviting normal, easy, and contagious.

## BRANDING

- Use practical branded materials to raise visibility:
  - T-shirts, hats, car window stickers
  - Invite cards, business cards
  - Feather flags and retractable banners
- Everything we put out should reflect our heart, our excellence, and our message.



# BUDGET & FUNDRAISING



LAUNCH BUDGET		
JUNE 2025 - MARCH 2026		
ADVERTISING	Social Media Ads	\$6,000
	Launch Party (food, gifts, inflatables)	\$5,000
DEVELOPMENT	Website	\$5,000
	Launch Team Training	\$1,000
	Outreach/Interest Parties	\$5,000
	Office Supplies	\$1,000
	Digital Giving Fees	\$ 800
	Facility Rental (1 month out)	\$4,000
EQUIPMENT	Audio/Video/Lighting Systems	\$25,000
	Musical Instruments	\$1,500
	Nursery/Kids Equipment	\$7,500
	Background Checks	\$ 500
	Signage	\$6,000
	Dues/Subscriptions/Software	\$1,500
	Equipment Cases for storage	\$1,000
SALARY	Lead Pastor Salary	\$10,000
TOTAL LAUNCH BUDGET		\$80,800

YEAR ONE OPERATIONS BUDGET		
April 2026 - March 2027		
BUILDINGS	Rent - \$1,000/week	\$52,000
SALARIES	Pastor's Salary	\$40,000
	Stipends - weekly payment for leadership roles	\$10,400
OPERATIONS	Church Liability Insurance	\$ 1,200
	Advertising - Social Media	\$ 2,000
	Outreach/Special Events	\$10,000
	Visitor Hospitality	\$ 3,500
	Meals/Coffee-visitors, others	\$ 3,500
	Internet/Hot Spot	\$ 600
	Kids Equipment/Supplies	\$ 1,800
	Background Checks	\$ 500
	Office Supplies	\$ 600
	Printing	\$ 1,800
	Software/Dues/Subscriptions	\$ 1,800
	Digital Giving Fees	\$ 1,000
	Travel & Conference-Network Council	\$ 800
MISSIONS	Local/National/Global	\$14,905
SAVINGS	Savings	\$4,000
TOTAL OPERATIONAL BUDGET		\$150,405

**TOTAL LAUNCH YEAR & YEAR ONE OPERATIONS BUDGET = \$231,205**

Our goal is to raise \$231,205 by pre-launch in March of 2026. Once we raise our first \$30,000, the Northern Missouri District will donate \$30,000. Reach Network has also pledged an additional \$10,000.

## SOURCES OF INCOME

- Church Speaking engagements
- Monthly Support
- Launch Team tithe
- Individual donors
- Reach Network
- Church Multiplication Network matching funds

## WAYS TO HELP

- Pray
- Financial Support
- Join the Connect Church Launch Team | Contact Pastor Bob at 573.353.1484

## WAYS TO GIVE

- Online: [www.tinyurl.com/connectchurchgiving](http://www.tinyurl.com/connectchurchgiving)
- Cash or Check: Payable to Reach Network, Memo: Connect Church – Nilges  
Mail To: Reach Network, P.O. Box 215, Wentzville, MO 63385

SCAN QR CODE TO GIVE



CONNECT CHURCH - NILGES

# MAINTAINING MOMENTUM



CONNECT  
CHURCH



# MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

## PRE-LAUNCH GOALS

- Secure meeting space by March 1
- Complete full fundraising by March 1
- Order majority of equipment and signage by January 1
- Have team leaders for all teams by February 1
- Have 60 people on launch team by February 1
- Have 60 people on launch team that have gone through our Growth Track and placed on a serve team.

## POST-LAUNCH GOALS

- Build a large Easter Service—Sunday, April 5, 2026
- Start Growth Track class one month after launch date
- Start small groups ministry in third month after launch date
- Work to get 50% of our church into small groups.
- Work to get 20% of first-time guests to visit for a second time.
- Grow to 125 people weekly by end of first year
- Quarterly “relaunch” Connect Church every quarter via a direct mailer and advertising connected to a quarterly church event

## YEAR 1 FINANCIAL GOALS

- General Fund Giving—\$150,000
- Give \$15,000 to local and world missions

## YEAR 1 MISSIONS GOALS

- Coordinate a short-term WORLD MISSIONS trip.
- Partner with local organizations to feed the homeless and other community projects.





Planting a church is a marathon, not a sprint. Staying healthy and growing personally is key to avoiding burnout and leading well for the long haul. Here's how we plan to keep ourselves sharp and balanced:

## STAYING FRESH

- Prioritizing regular date nights, time with family, hosting gatherings for friends at our home, and taking annual vacations.
- Continue taking regular walks on the KATY trail with our faithful dog, Chief.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- We have completed the Church Multiplication Network (CMN) Launch training and attended the annual CMN Church Planters Conference in Houston. We plan to continue to attend each year.
- Bob is a participant of Mike Santiago's Healthy Leadership Solutions.

## COACHING

- We're blessed to have two great coaches in our corner: Chris Wiggs, is a church planter and the current director of Reach Network from the Southern Missouri Ministry Network in Springfield, Missouri. Corbin Huffman, is pastor and planter of LifeChange Church in Newark, Ohio. He was our CMN Launch Training Coach in Orlando.

## SABBATH

- We're planning to have all Sunday prep done by Thursday. Saturdays will be reserved for rest.

## PERSONAL HEALTH

- We'll maintain our physical health by exercising at our local gym, walking trails and eating healthy. Spiritually, we spend regular times together in prayer. We also have regular, personal Bible and devotion times.



**CONNECT**  
CHURCH