



Introducing



fellowship
seffner

Our First Satellite Campus

Engaging our communities and beyond...

Information & FAQs

The Fellowship Family is growing. We recently adopted Bible Baptist Church (BBC), located at 401 W. US Highway 92 in Seffner as a satellite campus of Fellowship. Fellowship Baptist Church, Seffner Campus, or “Fellowship Seffner,” for short. Bart Denny, a long-time member of our church staff, serves as campus pastor in Seffner.

This is an exciting opportunity for our church, and one that fits naturally with our vision of engaging our communities and beyond with the life-changing gospel and love of Jesus Christ. Our church vision is to adopt five such campuses over the next ten years, with Seffner as the first.

What does “adopting” a satellite campus mean?

The property and congregation in Seffner will become part of our church. We are not merely helping out a smaller church. This is Fellowship Baptist Church, at a second location. Bible Baptist Church (BBC) ceased to exist and gifted their property to Fellowship.

We prefer the word “adoption” over words like “acquisition” or “merger.” This is because we wish to communicate a sense of family—which is what adoption really is.

As with any adoption, the one being adopted takes on the adopting family’s name. Both locations are Fellowship Baptist Church, and we will brand the Seffner campus “Fellowship Seffner,” for short.

We are one church in two locations!

Timeline

Bible Baptist Church formally disbanded and held its last service on August 2, 2020. On September 20, 2020, the Seffner Campus launch team—composed of a cadre of members from the 301 campus and former members of Bible Baptist Church—held the first service as “Fellowship Seffner.”

Since then, Fellowship Seffner has been in the “preparation phase,” working out any kinks that appear as we replicate Fellowship’s DNA, and launching key ministries such as SuperChurch for kids and a vibrant student ministry for teens.

Leading up to an eventual hard launch in January 2021, we will hold several outreach events in Seffner and will promote the launch through mail, web, and social media. Stay tuned for more information!

Why Are We Doing This?

Our leadership here at Fellowship has prayerfully considered adopting another church as a satellite campus for several years now. With our building campaign complete, there are several reasons that we believe God is showing us that now is the right time to adopt and the Seffner location is the right location.

Extending Our Mission and the Presence of Christ in Our Communities

At Fellowship, we are engaging our communities and beyond with the life-changing gospel and love of Jesus Christ. We are not looking to gain assets, but to grow our means of engaging our communities and beyond.

Proximity and Population Density

The Seffner campus is located a mere eight miles from our 301 campus on Highway 301, and less than five miles from the former Main Street location of our Mission Thonotosassa. The addition of a campus in Seffner gives us a beachhead for ministry in a densely populated community that we were already trying to reach.

Unlike our 301 campus on Highway 301, the Seffner campus is within easy walking distance of thousands of people and several schools. What’s more, over 71,000 people live within a 10-minute driving distance of the Seffner Campus.

Deep Relational Connections

Adopting a smaller church as a satellite campus can often be difficult for both congregations. Experts who have seen many church adoptions say it usually takes two or three years for it to “feel” like one church in two locations. However, we believe that existing relationships will help make this time of transition easier for both groups.

Our connections with the church in Seffner run deep. Pastor Bart Denny has served over three years as pastor of Bible Baptist Church, and he will continue to serve as the Seffner campus pastor. He is a long-time member of Fellowship and has served on our church staff for six years. Pastor Bart is in synch with our philosophy of ministry, and Fellowship’s “DNA” flows through his veins!

Further, Brother Roger Triplett, who served as pastor of Bible Baptist Church for over thirty years, is a member of Fellowship. Brother Roger has been a great supporter of our move to adopt his former church.

Beyond these pastoral leadership connections, many other relationships and personal connections exist between members of the two churches. What’s more, the congregation at BBC voted unanimously to join the Fellowship family.

Sustainability for Community Ministries

Mission Thonotosassa facilities inadequate

We moved the ministry taking place at Mission Thonotosassa to our Seffner Campus. When we launched Mission Thonotosassa in a Main Street storefront several years ago, we knew that the facility was not ideal.

The Main Street building did not meet fire code and does not receive maintenance it should. All the while, we continued to invest in monthly rent, utilities, insurance, and repairs to occupy a building we do not own, and that poorly met our needs. This was unsustainable in the long-term.

Community ministries done with excellence

Due to its limitations, the Main Street storefront did not present the image of excellence in ministry that we would like to display in our community ministries. Our inability to portray a high level of excellence may have prevented some people from investing resources into our community ministries.

We can do better in our communities!

We will do community ministries with passion and excellence. We will invest our resources into our own property and more significant ministry, rather than pouring into rent that has no return on our investment.

We will move our community ministry functions over to the Seffner campus. The Seffner campus is less than five miles from the current Main Street location. It is also a much nicer and larger facility. The Seffner campus is a full-service church facility; it is not “The Mission.”

The Seffner property, and the amenities available there, allow us the perfect place to minister to our communities. Here we can engage our communities and beyond in an area within easy walking distance for many people in need.

Pastor Bart will provide pastoral oversight for our community ministries. He helped us launch the Mission and has remained on its board of directors. Like our volunteers, Pastor Bart is passionate about serving the at-risk populations of Thonotosassa and Seffner.

Recovery Ministry

When we launched Mission Thonotosassa, we wanted to offer an addiction recovery support group. Pastor Bart has already launched a Celebrate Recovery[®] program in Seffner. Celebrate Recovery[®] is a Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kind. Celebrate Recovery is a safe place to find community and freedom from the issues that are controlling

our lives.

Celebrate Recovery® is a nationally recognized program that is well-promoted and provides excellent volunteer training. The program is recommended by many mental health professionals and is approved by the court systems.

Youth and Children's Ministries

In the near term, our focus is on replicating our regular Sunday kids' children's programming in Seffner. We will not immediately begin afterschool programs as we once hoped to run at the Mission.

However, we believe our proximity to so many schools in Seffner will allow us ample future opportunities for ministry to the youth and children of the neighborhood. These ministries will take place in the context of Fellowship's overarching strategy for outreach and ministry to children, youth, and their families.

Leadership Laboratory

A small campus is one of the best ministry leadership laboratories available. Leadership opportunities abound that might not be available as quickly as possible in a larger campus setting. Our goal in using the Seffner campus as a leadership laboratory is not merely to build only the leaders the Seffner campus needs (and it does need leaders). Instead, we desire to provide hands-on ministry and leadership training that will benefit our entire church and beyond.

Fellowship Bible Institute

We will provide not only hands-on training, but foundational the foundational biblical, theological, teaching, managerial, and administrative knowledge and skills needed to function at a high level in a ministry setting. We will benefit from the knowledge and experience of several seasoned Bible teachers and ministry experts. Most classes will take place at the

Seffner campus.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the current service schedule for the satellite campus?

- Sunday morning worship, 11 a.m.
- Community Food Pantry, Thurs., 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Celebrate Recovery, Thurs., 6:30 p.m.

How long are we going to be doing this?

This is an adoption, not “foster care.” The adoption of the Seffner campus is permanent.

What about financial obligations?

The Seffner property is debt-free and the buildings are in good shape. The entire property was gifted to Fellowship. We have been able to complete renovations at a relatively low cost. What's more, the basic operating expenses for the property are less in one year than our total current fiscal surplus for the year, even if no one in Seffner contributed financially. (Rest assured, however, that those who attend services at Seffner do give).

Additionally, many of the administrative costs of running the Seffner campus can be eliminated or absorbed into those of the 301 campus with little or no cost. What's more, we will no longer pay rent, utilities, and insurance costs for the storefront Mission.

We also performed due diligence on the property, ensuring that there were no environmental problems, liens on the property, or severe structural issues with the buildings. This gives us confidence that there are no ticking financial timebombs with the property.

What About Giving?

All physical and online donations will be handled under Fellowship's current giving structure. There is no separate giving system for the Seffner campus. We do ask however, that online givers at Seffner select the "Seffner Campus" in our new online giving program or write "Seffner" in the memo line of any checks. This will help us to track giving that takes place at the Seffner campus.

Will preaching at the Seffner Campus be live or videotaped?

For the most part, messages will be preached live, by the campus pastor and others as team, not by video. Messages preached at the Seffner campus will follow the same calendar as the 301 campus. Pastor Mike will frequently present short welcome or informational videos, and will occasionally choose to preach in person or by video on the campus.

What Volunteer Opportunities Exist at the Seffner Campus?

Many! We need help standing up vibrant nursery, children's, and youth ministries. To the greatest extent possible, these programs will replicate what is going on at the 301 campus, with supervision not only from the campus pastor, but from Olivia Johnson, our Kids' Ministry Overseer, and Pastor Dave Dahmer, our student pastor.

We can also use help with ushers and greeters, music ministry (whether you play an instrument or sing), technology, outreach, community food pantry, and Celebrate Recovery.

I'd like to volunteer at the Seffner Campus, but does that mean I have to stay there for good?

We would certainly like to have people that attend the 301 campus who will be willing to commit to serving at Seffner for six months, a year, or longer. We understand that, for various reasons, not everyone can make such a commitment. So, we

can also use people who are willing to come and serve for one week a month, or who are able to serve at specific events, such as doorhanger outreaches or neighborhood barbeques.

What's more, serving at Seffner, you are still part of Fellowship. If you serve on Sundays at Seffner, you can attend other services, events, and small groups at the 301 campus (as those who typically attend the 301 campus on Sundays will be able to attend other services, events, and small groups at Seffner.)

Will we hold AWANA at the Seffner Campus?

We do not intend to hold AWANA in Seffner. However, if there is sufficient interest, we will provide transportation from the Seffner Campus to the 301 campus for AWANA on Wednesday nights.

What about Coronavirus?

The Seffner campus will follow all coronavirus-related precautions taken by the 301 campus as long as the pandemic is ongoing. What's more, the current pandemic also gives us opportunities to live on mission in our communities.

Will we adopt another campus?

We believe that God has given us the vision to adopt five satellite campuses over the next ten years, with Seffner as the first.

We do not yet know exactly when or where God would have us launch another satellite campus. However, we are in prayer about the next location and invite you to join us in praying for the next location. We will apply all of the lessons learned at Seffner to our next campus.

If you're up to the challenge, don't be shy: let us know! Start learning the ins-and-outs of developing a satellite campus with us and Seffner, then come along to the next location as a seasoned veteran!