

## From small beginnings...

By Joe Hamilton

“Let’s make a list...” said Shane Delagrang. And that’s how it started. From a simple list of the men of our church, a men’s fellowship was reborn. The Lord had been talking to Shane for some time about restarting a men’s fellowship at New Covenant UMC. Sitting around a kitchen table on a mission team in central Mexico in 2006, Shane listened to what God had to say.

We were relaxing after a day of work at the la Unión church in Tlaxcala, Mexico. After the evening meal we were talking about ways to engage the men of our small country church in Douglasville, GA in mission and ministry. We knew that the Lord had plans for us and we wanted to hear what He had to say.

So we began to list the names of men that might be involved in a possible UMM group at our church. With our pastor, Rev. Keith Windmiller, we came up with a list of over 30 men in a church of about 90 attendees on any given Sunday. Then we agreed to pray faithfully about the list.

After we got home from the mission trip, Shane got the OK from one of our men, John Palmer, who agreed to host a gathering of men for a BBQ at his farm. We had no idea how many men would come, but we invited everyone on the list, plus some. 20+ men came to the first gathering.

It was clear that the Lord was in the work. From that first meeting grew a monthly meeting on the first Friday of every month. From the fellowship and camaraderie with like-minded men, empowered by prayer and the Holy Spirit, we were motivated to seek ways that God could use us for our church and our community.

From the wonderful fellowship and motivation of that first meeting has come the following, not to say “look at what we did!” but to give glory to God and say “look at what He can do through His men!”

- A re-chartered fellowship, with an a typical gathering of 15-25 men every 1<sup>st</sup> Friday; at some point, every man named on the original list has attended, and new men have been added,
- A renewed willingness on the part of the members to serve our church and community wherever needed,
- The annual ‘Pig-pull,’ an outreach to the community, with 200 or more persons gathering for fellowship and food each fall as guests of our church at a local farm, complete with a whole BBQ’ pig, hayrides, and music,
- ‘The Pumpkin Patch’ on the front lawn of the church; for three weeks every October pumpkins are sold with the proceeds benefitting community outreach programs of the church; our location on a heavily traveled state highway has led to opportunities to meet and get to know many new people in our community,
- A community Christmas party complete with Santa and gifts for children,
- Men have smoked turkeys each Thanksgiving for a local ministry serving needy families.

- Established a connection with a local school and provided a Christmas for children identified by the school as having profound needs,
- Men of the fellowship completely replaced floor trusses and flooring for a local needy family whose sink had fallen through a rotted kitchen floor,
- In partnership with other area UMM fellowships, members have worked on framing a house for a Katrina survivor in the parking lot of an area church, helping to completely frame the home and seeing it pull out on a fully loaded flatbed truck for the Mississippi coast in 5 hours,
- Participated in multiple trips to the Mississippi coast to help repair homes for hurricane survivors, with more trips planned,
- Served on mission teams to Mexico, helping build a church for a poor community.

From a simple list of men God has blessed and grown a fellowship of believers committed to allowing God to work through them. Make your own list. See what God will do.

Joseph Hamilton

[joe@newcovumc.com](mailto:joe@newcovumc.com)