



In January of 1989, Pastor Jim Zippay and a core group of approximately 30 members began to prayerfully explore the idea of beginning a new church in the Westerville, Ohio area. Though the Westerville community already had a number of excellent churches at the time, it was obvious that, in light of its rapid growth and demographic profile, many residents were not actively involved in a local church. There seemed to be a need for a church focused on reaching out to those who had never been introduced to, or had turned away from Christianity.

On September 10, 1989, Heritage held its first official worship service with over 150 people in attendance, and for the next ten years continued to meet on Sunday mornings at the Heritage Middle School in north Westerville. In 1995, Heritage Christian Church purchased ten acres of land on Maxtown Road. Construction of a 22,000-square foot multi-purpose facility for worship and community activity began in October 1997. On December 24, 1998, the doors of the Heritage Worship and Community Center were opened to the congregation and surrounding community as 500 people enjoyed a special Christmas Eve service.

In the summer of 1998, numeric growth climbed at a rate much higher than ever before. By March 2000, the attendance at our Sunday morning services had reached the capacity of our Worship Center, and we added a second Sunday service.

Our attendance continued to grow about 30% each year, and in October 2001, we launched a building program to add a 12,000-square foot educational wing on the north side of the building. As our Sunday services continued to be near capacity, and to meet a need for an alternative worship option for many in our congregation, we added a Saturday evening service in March 2003.

Since our inception we at Heritage have embraced the philosophy that we are nothing more than followers of Jesus who step as He leads. As we have responded to His lead He has freely brought more people, built them in our midst, and blessed us (and our surrounding community) through the ways He used them. This is evidenced in the pastoral and administrative staff He has assembled here at Heritage to serve and shepherd the growing numbers that attend Heritage on any given weekend.

This value of “followership” can be clearly seen over the years as our corporate worship services, Children’s Ministry, Student Ministry, Family Life Ministry, Care Ministry and even our Equipping Classes have changed and evolved. It has even affected the way we do Group Life. Even though small groups have been a part of the mix since our beginning, we have grown in our understanding of the importance of following Christ “in the company of friends.”

The impact of our heart to follow Christ also led to our involvement in Missions. We strive to fulfill the great commission not only in our community but also in the world. Our first mission trip was to Honduras (after Hurricane Mitch) in February 1999, and since then, many of our members have taken numerous mission trips to Honduras, El Salvador, Central Asia, Berlin, Africa, and an Arizona Indian Reservation. We also support numerous organizations within the community, such as Better Way Ministries, Westerville Area Resource Ministry, and International Friendships. We currently give 19% of our budget to missions with scheduled increases of 1 percent until we reach our goal of 20%.

Heritage grew an average of 35% per year from 2000-2004. In November 2004, we expanded with a two-story, 63,000-square foot educational/office wing. This space included a children’s wing, office space, adult education classrooms, and increased foyer space. The plans also expanded the current worship center to accommodate over 800 people.

Even with all the extra physical space it still seemed we couldn’t keep up with the number of people God kept bringing into our midst. So, in 2006 once again God led us to follow Him into new spaces. We sent out almost 350 people to

plant churches in the communities of Dublin, Delaware, and Marysville. By this work of His doing [Vista Community Church](#) in Dublin and [Haven Community Church](#) in Marysville, formerly Heritage Marysville, are thriving as God continues to reveal the niche He has created for each in their respective communities. Since we have sent them out God has only added more to our number of those involved in this faith community!

In January, 2010, God amazed us as we witnessed nearly 400 people attend the first worship service at [northchurch](#), our church plant in the Lewis Center area and in January 2011, Heritage partnered with the Evangelical Covenant denomination and commissioned Pastor Richard Johnson to start [Sanctuary Columbus Church](#) in one of the most multi-ethnic areas of Columbus.

In 2013, God opened the doors to [The Bridge](#), a volunteer service organization located on the west side of Columbus, to focus on helping the surrounding community.

We recognize that our history is unique, as it should be. When God multiplies a pastor and 30 core members into over 3,000 people gathering on a weekend to seek and worship God in this community as well as an 8-member [pastoral team](#) with over 40 supporting [staff members](#), we can’t help but respond with anything less than a posture to follow Him. He has led us thus far, so we trust Him to continue. So, for whatever our future may be, we commit to remaining responsive to His leading for His glory and our good. As we continue to grow, we’re seeking God for the next step we can take to “make room for one more,” always looking to embrace and include the people God is leading through our doors!