

Church of the Exiles

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we forming a new church?

Church of the Exiles (COTE) was not formed because we wanted to leave Main Campus or because we had decided that North Katy needed to become an independent church. When we began this work, we did not expect Church of the Exiles would ever actually need to launch.

As uncertainty grew around the future of North Katy, the Advisory Team spent approximately six weeks praying and asking God what we were supposed to do. After weeks of silence, some members of the Advisory Team began to hear God's simple prompting: "BUILD."

At times, it felt a little like Noah building the ark; we were preparing something we weren't even sure we would ever need. We didn't know what was coming, and we certainly weren't predicting that North Katy would become independent. We simply believed God was asking us to prepare.

So we began building quietly and deliberately seeking God's will. We developed the basic structure of a church that could care for the congregation if it ever became necessary. Our hope was that it wouldn't be necessary—that Main Campus and North Katy would find a healthy path forward and the plans we were making would remain only a contingency.

Then circumstances changed. Jeff accepted a call to another church, and the future of North Katy became immediately uncertain. What had seemed unlikely suddenly became possible, and the structure we had prayerfully prepared was there.

We don't claim to have understood what God was doing when we began. We still don't have every answer. But looking back, we are grateful that when we felt Him say "Build," we were willing to build before we knew whether we would ever need what we were building.

Is Church of the Exiles being formed only because Jeff is leaving?

No. Work on Church of the Exiles began before Jeff announced his resignation. His departure accelerated the need to determine what comes next, but it did not create the concern about North Katy's future.

The church was established because leaders believed we needed to be prepared for several possible outcomes and wanted a structure in place that could care for the congregation if North Katy's relationship with Main Campus did not improve.

Is this just a reaction to the Town Hall?

No. The April Town Hall was painful for many people, particularly because of the proposal to eliminate the Spanish-language service. But it was one event in a much longer period of uncertainty and difficult interaction between Main Campus leadership and North Katy.

In the months before and after the Town Hall, North Katy leaders participated in numerous conversations and meetings with Main Campus leadership in an effort to communicate the concerns of the North Katy congregation and find a healthy path forward. Despite those efforts, North Katy leaders often came away from those interactions feeling that their concerns had not been heard or understood. At times, those leaders felt that information or assurances communicated in meetings and subsequent correspondence did not seem consistent with later communications, decisions, or actions. Over time, these experiences made it increasingly difficult for them to understand what North Katy could rely upon as they planned for the future.

Our decision is not based on one meeting, one disagreement, or one moment of hurt. It comes after many months of prayer, conversations, attempts at reconciliation, discernment, and preparation.

What happened after the Town Hall?

Following the Town Hall, Main Campus leadership gave the North Katy leaders a written assessment identifying eleven areas of concern at the campus. The document also established three specific goals for Jeff's leadership to be reached by October 31: average weekly attendance of 350, 125 adults engaged in discipleship relationships, and 135 adults and teens actively serving.

What was not stated on the handout was equally significant to our understanding of the situation: North Katy leaders subsequently learned that failure to meet the required expectations could result in the termination of Jeff's employment.

Until that point, some of us did not fully understand how uncertain North Katy's future had become. These were not simply aspirational growth goals. We understood that serious employment consequences had been attached to them. If Jeff were no longer the pastor of North Katy, we did not know what would happen to the campus or to the congregation he had shepherded for thirteen years.

That realization became an important part of our decision to pray about what responsible preparation should look like. We did not know what would happen on October 31, and we genuinely hoped the goals would be met and that North Katy would have a healthy future within Main Campus. But we also believed it would be irresponsible to wait until a crisis occurred before asking how this congregation would be cared for if circumstances changed.

Did the Advisory Team decide this without the congregation?

The Advisory team did not decide that the North Katy congregation should leave Main Campus. What several North Katy leaders did decide, after weeks of prayer, was that we needed to prepare responsibly for an uncertain future.

Church of the Exiles was developed so that there would be a church ready to receive and care for people if independence became necessary or if Main Campus ultimately chose to close the North Katy campus. At the time COTE was formed, we did not know whether either of those things would happen, and we hoped the preparation might never be needed.

Does everyone at North Katy have to join Church of the Exiles?

Absolutely not. We love the people of North Katy regardless of where they worship.

Some may believe God is calling them to remain with Main Campus. Others may believe He is calling them to Church of the Exiles. Some may choose another church entirely.

The decision about where to worship and serve belongs to each individual and family. Our desire is not to pressure anyone toward COTE, but to make sure everyone has enough information to make a prayerful and informed decision. We encourage each person to pray, ask questions, seek the Lord's direction, and discern where He is calling them in this next season.

Is Church of the Exiles going to remain bilingual and multicultural?

Yes. Preserving the multicultural community of North Katy is one of the strongest convictions behind Church of the Exiles.

Our desire is to remain one church family where people from different cultures and languages worship, serve, grow, and share life together.

The exact structure of worship services and ministries is still being developed, but bilingual and multicultural ministry is part of the church's identity, not an optional program.

Who will lead Church of the Exiles?

Church of the Exiles is being established as an elder-led church, with deacons serving the practical needs of the congregation and a Board of Directors providing legal, financial, and corporate governance.

The Elders will provide spiritual leadership, biblical teaching, pastoral care, prayer, and shepherding of the congregation. Deacons will serve alongside the Elders by leading ministries of service, caring for practical needs, and helping equip and coordinate others to serve. The Board of Directors will provide appropriate oversight of the church's legal, financial, and organizational affairs.

Some leaders have already agreed to serve, while additional leadership roles will continue to be prayerfully discerned. We believe leadership should be plural, accountable, biblically grounded, and characterized by servant leadership.

Do we have a pastor?

Church of the Exiles does not currently have a vocational Lead Pastor. However, that does not mean the church will be without pastoral leadership.

COTE is being established as an elder-led church. The Elders are responsible together for shepherding the congregation through prayer, biblical teaching, pastoral care, spiritual leadership, and oversight. Some Elders may eventually serve vocationally, while others may serve in a lay capacity.

We will continue praying and discerning whether God is calling a vocational Lead Pastor to serve Church of the Exiles. Our goal, however, is for the spiritual health and direction of the church never to depend on one person. We believe Christ is the Head of the Church, and our Elders are called to shepherd His people together under His authority.

Where will Church of the Exiles meet?

We are actively exploring several locations in the North Katy area. Our priority is finding a place where we can worship together, care for children safely, and remain close to the community North Katy already serves.

We may begin as a portable church, and we are comfortable starting simply while we discern what God provides for the future. We also believe finding our first home is something we can do together.

If you know of a church, school, community facility, commercial space, or other location that might be available for Sunday worship, or if you have relationships that could help us identify one, we would love your help. Please share those ideas and connections with us.

When will the first service be?

Our current plan is to begin worshiping as Church of the Exiles on Sunday, September 6, following Jeff's final Sunday at North Katy on August 30.

We are actively working to secure a location for our first service. As those details are finalized, we will post updates, including service times and locations, at www.churchoftheexiles.org.

We encourage you to check the website regularly as we prepare for September 6.

What ministries will COTE have at launch?

We will begin with the ministries we can faithfully support rather than trying to recreate every program immediately.

Our priorities include:

- prayer
- worship

- pastoral care
- children, youth, and young adults
- discipleship and small-group community
- bilingual/multicultural ministry

Some of these ministries may look simple at first, and others will develop as God provides leaders, volunteers, and resources. One of the opportunities of building a new church is that ministry does not have to begin with a staff position or an established program. If God has given you a passion for a particular area of ministry, we invite you to help us build it.

We want to equip people to use the gifts God has given them to serve the Body of Christ. As people step forward to lead and serve, additional ministries can grow from the needs and gifts God places within our church family.

Will children and youth still have ministry?

Children and students are deeply important to Church of the Exiles, but we may not be able to offer full programming immediately. No matter what programming is available, we want you and your children to join us. We love children and families, and they are an important part of our church family.

Our first priority is to gather safely as a church family. What we are able to provide for children and students will depend on our meeting location and the volunteers God provides.

As COTE grows, we want to develop safe, meaningful opportunities for children and students to know Jesus, grow in their faith, and build relationships with one another. If ministry to children or students is an area God has placed on your heart, we would love for you to help us build it.

What about missions and benevolence?

Missions and caring for people in need are important parts of the church we want Church of the Exiles to become. We may not begin with the financial resources or established programs of a larger church, but we do not believe we have to wait until we are a large church to begin serving others.

We want to build these ministries responsibly, beginning with what God has entrusted to us and growing as He provides people, relationships, and resources.

Whether that means supporting missionaries, serving our local community, providing practical help to a family in need, or simply showing up for one another, we want generosity and service to be part of COTE's identity from the beginning.

Does Church of the Exiles have money?

Not yet. Church of the Exiles is a brand-new church, and today we do not have significant financial resources.

As part of the transition discussions, we have asked Main Campus to consider blessing the new church with financial support, equipment, and other resources that could help us begin. We are grateful that those conversations are taking place, but we do not yet know what Main Campus will ultimately provide.

Regardless of the outcome of those discussions, we trust that God will provide what we need to do what He has called us to do. We are committed to starting simply, living within our means, being transparent about our finances, and carefully stewarding whatever resources He entrusts to us.

Can I give to Church of the Exiles?

Yes. Church of the Exiles is incorporated as a Texas nonprofit religious organization and has established a bank account with American Christian Credit Union to receive contributions directly.

Churches that meet the requirements of Section 501(c)(3) are not required to apply to the IRS for recognition of tax-exempt status. Church of the Exiles is being organized and operated as a church for religious purposes, and we intend to comply with all applicable requirements for tax-exempt churches.

We are currently finalizing our giving systems. Information about how to give will be available at www.churchoftheexiles.org as those details are completed.

Financial accountability has been important to us from the beginning. COTE has already adopted a Financial Controls Policy establishing safeguards for receiving, spending, recording, and reporting church funds. We are committed to transparency, appropriate oversight, and faithful stewardship of every resource entrusted to the church.

Is Church of the Exiles a 501(c)(3)?

Church of the Exiles is organized as a nonprofit church in Texas. Unlike most nonprofit organizations, churches that meet the requirements of Section 501(c)(3) are automatically considered tax-exempt under federal law and are not required to apply to the IRS for formal recognition of that status.

Church of the Exiles was incorporated as a Texas nonprofit corporation on June 28, 2026, and is being organized and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes. We are committed to meeting the requirements applicable to tax-exempt churches and to maintaining appropriate financial and organizational accountability.

Will Main Campus give COTE the North Katy building?

No. Main Campus leadership has made clear that the North Katy property is not being offered to Church of the Exiles as part of the transition.

The Transition Team is continuing discussions regarding other ways Main Campus may support COTE's launch, including possible financial support, equipment, and other resources.

Our plans for Church of the Exiles are therefore moving forward without depending on the North Katy property.

What about the money given through the Make Room for Grace campaign?

The Make Room for Grace campaign identified establishing a permanent home for North Katy as one of its major funding priorities.

Main Campus has referenced \$117,000 that is identified as contributions from North Katy members toward the Make Room for Grace campaign and indicated that this amount could be included within a potential releasing gift to Church of the Exiles.

Main Campus has discussed providing financial support and possibly other resources to help Church of the Exiles begin. No specific amount or final package has been committed to COTE at this time. Any proposed transition agreement or financial gift will ultimately require approval by Main Campus's Board, which is scheduled to consider these matters on August 30.

Until then, we are grateful for Main Campus's willingness to discuss supporting the new church, while continuing to plan responsibly for COTE regardless of what is ultimately approved.

Why the name "Church of the Exiles"?

We will share the fuller biblical meaning of our name separately, but at its heart, Church of the Exiles is a statement about who we are as followers of Jesus—not about where we were born, where we live, or the circumstances that brought this church together.

Scripture describes all followers of Jesus as sojourners and exiles whose ultimate citizenship is in God's Kingdom. We are called to live faithfully, love generously, and bear witness to Jesus in the communities where God has placed us as we await the fullness of His Kingdom.

For us, “exile” is not a statement of defeat, rejection, or isolation. It is a declaration of hope and belonging. Our deepest identity is found in Jesus Christ, and together we want to live faithfully as citizens of His Kingdom.

What can I do right now?

First, pray. Pray for wisdom, humility, unity, courage, and faithfulness for everyone involved.

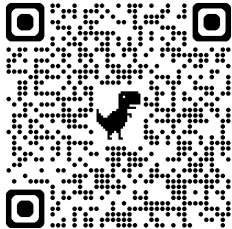
Then ask God honestly:

Where are You calling me and my family to worship, serve, be shepherded, and help build Your Church in this next season?

If you believe God may be calling you to Church of the Exiles, we would love for you to join us; not simply as someone who attends, but as someone who helps us build.

There is much to do, and there is a place for you. We need people willing to pray, serve, care for others, welcome families, work with children and students, worship, teach, organize, set up, build relationships, help us find a meeting place, and use whatever gifts God has given them for the good of His Church.

Want to stay connected or help us build? Scan here.



You can also visit us at www.churchoftheexiles.org.