

Epikos Church

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Epikos Church also Connects to

- Westminster Presbyterian Church

Historical Overview

Epikos is a non-denominational church with three locations throughout Milwaukee. Epikos East Side is located at 2308 E Bellevue Place. The name is a reference to the Greek work for “epic.” The church’s website references the dictionary definition of epic as “pertaining to a long poetic composition, usually centered upon a hero, in which a series of significant achievements or events is narrated in elevated style.”

Epikos officially launched on January 8, 2005, with Danny Parmelee served as the lead pastor. Parmelee and his wife Emili moved to Milwaukee in 2004 and began creating relationships in the community. Eventually a small group was formed, first meeting in the Parmelee’s living room. As more groups began to form the need for a larger meeting place was recognized. Epikos began to rent Westminster Presbyterian Church for Saturday services. Eventually Sunday services were also added. Epikos purchased the building from Westminster Presbyterian in 2009. Membership continued to grow, and in June 2011 they purchased the Paradise Theater in West Allis, Epikos West Allis opened one year later. In August 2016 Epikos launched their North Side service held at Barack Obama School of Career and Technical Education. This location was launched with the hopes of expanding the Epikos community, placing value on a multi-ethnic/multi-racial church. With their new additions the church has stated that they remain “One Church, on one Missions, with one Message”¹. One way the church accomplishes this is by having one preacher physically or virtually preach to all locations. On March 7, 2017 Danny Parmelee preached his final sermon as lead pastor of Epikos. The church is currently in the process of hiring a new lead pastor.

Epikos left the building most untouched; the windows, light fixtures, and pews still reflect the building’s previous occupants. After buying the building from Westminster, the organ was removed, and updated sound equipment was added for the church’s contemporary worship services.

Small groups continue to be a major part of Epikos. Groups meet weekly to discuss the sermon, pray and grow as a community. Small groups are one chance for members of the various locations coming together. Groups meet in the home of members all over Milwaukee and can be for men, women, couples, or mixed individuals. Since the start of Epikos, college students have had a presence in the church. On Sunday mornings the church has a bus that picks up students at Marquette, MSOE, and UW-Milwaukee. With the latest addition of the North Side location, the church has continued to see growth. In the past year they have tended to average 10-15 new people every week. The church offers a children’s ministry for infants to 5th grade, as well as programs for 6th grade- high school.

The worship style of Epikos is contemporary; songs from artists such as Hillsong United, Elevation Worship, and other popular Christian groups are often heard. It is not uncommon to see members of the congregation raising their hands or clapping along to the songs. Services begin with prayer, which leads into a time of worship, followed by a message from one of Epikos’ pastors. The overall feel of a service is very casual. Members are encouraged to “come as they are”; jeans and tattoos are not an uncommon occurrence even among the pastors.

¹ Danny Parmelee, <https://www.epikos.org/2016/04/21/north-side-location-service-times/>

Timeline

- 2004- Danny and Emili Parmelee begin holding meetings at their two-bedroom flat off Brady St.
- 2005- January 8. Epikos officially launches as a church
- 2009- Epikos buys building from Westminster Presbyterian
- 2011- June. Epikos purchases the Paradise Theater
- 2012- June 10. Epikos West Allis holds their first service
- 2016- August. Epikos holds their first service at the Barack Obama School of Career and Technical Education
- 2017- April 17. Parmelee preaches his last sermon at Epikos

Annotated Bibliography

“History & Vision” Epikos Church. <https://www.epikos.org/history-vision/> (Accessed March 20, 2018).

Parmelee, Danny. “North Side Location & Service Times” Epikos Church. <https://www.epikos.org/2016/04/21/north-side-location-service-times/> (Accessed April 19, 2018)