



Goodwater Update: July 2025

Highlights

Sunday morning services at the lake had just ended and I (Michele) spotted a young mom standing under the shade of a giant pine tree a short distance away. I met her for the first time earlier that week at our first ever women's bible study we started at a local coffee shop. As we began to chat, my new acquaintance introduced me to a friend she brought with her, another new mom holding a sleeping infant in her arms. The woman I had met only days before told me she had invited her friend to come join us in Bible study and I turned to the woman and told her she can absolutely join us. She laughed and said she knows nothing about the Bible to which I quickly told her, "You don't need to know anything!" The women began chuckling and said that was the same thing an older woman had just told her. The exact same words! We're praying she, and others just like her, will come and see what God is doing. Because one thing is clear: God is on the move in Whitefish.

Ministry: Relationships are growing, and Curt has been preaching regularly, this summer at Stillwater Lake. The Lord is drawing the curious!

Partnerships: We are so excited to welcome the Palmer Family to Whitefish! Jason will serve as the Executive Pastor of Goodwater Church. We also have two new church partnerships and several team trips scheduled for the summer and fall.

Financial: We are grateful for continued provision and are praying for additional support as we prepare for our October service launch.

Prayer: Please join us in praying for our summer services and the formation of our core team.



Ministry Update

SUMMER SERVICES AT STILLWATER LAKE. We have entered another new mile in our church planting journey! This summer we are joining together with a gathering of people who meet to worship together at Stillwater Lake. Curt has been preaching through the book of John with an emphasis on the invitation before all of us to come and see what God is doing. The gathering has drawn a variety of people in all stages of their spiritual journey. We love how the Lord is drawing the committed, the curious, the wanderers, and the seekers. He is at work. God is building His kingdom and inviting all who follow Him to join in and invite others to come and see.

FALL LAUNCH PREPARATION. Our official Goodwater service launch is scheduled for October 5th. We will be meeting in the Performing Arts Center located in downtown Whitefish. Two separate teams from partners churches will be joining us that weekend, helping serve at a local trail race on Saturday and the launch service on Sunday. Please join us in praying over all the many logistics as we move toward this milestone, including praying the Lord will provide a worship leader as well as leaders for the kid's ministry.

BIBLE STUDIES. Both Curt and Michele are leading weekly gatherings for men and women to gather around God's word. It has been a joy to see who the Lord is raising up to help and attend. There are seasoned believers hungry to go deeper, nonbelievers who are curious, and people hungry for community.

COMMUNITY SERVICE. We have an opportunity to paint the Whitefish football stadium (a project that has been years in the making - well before we arrived!). This is a great chance to serve our community in a visible way.

Partnerships

We are so excited to welcome the Palmer family to Whitefish! Jason Palmer will serve as Goodwater Church's Executive Pastor. Jason is a retired U.S. Army Chaplain, PhD student, adjunct professor, and volunteer law enforcement chaplain who is passionate about developing teams, gifted in administrative and operational leadership, and committed to expeditionary ministry. He and his wife, Christie, have been married 25 years and have four amazing sons and one exceptional daughter-in-law. Through nine military deployments and many moves, he has learned to embrace Luke 5:11 which says, *"Then they brought the boats to land, left everything, and followed him."*



We were able to spend some incredible time with our partners from the CrossCreek Network which is a church-planting initiative designed to plant disciple-making churches locally, nationally, and globally. We had incredible conversations during our time together, soaking up the wisdom and counsel of experienced church planters who spent years ministering in the Pacific Northwest.

In May, we welcomed a planning team from CrossCreek Church. They came to film videos for their summer Adventure Week "Wonder in the BIG Sky." They have an incredible team and there was so much laughter and joy in our visit. We are so thankful that kids throughout the DFW metroplex had the opportunity to learn how BIG God is and how He is at work here in Montana!



Partnerships, continued:

We have two new church partnerships since March, 2025, bringing our total to eight church partners, with three of them being other Montana churches.

TEAMS

During mid-July we have a team, comprised primarily of college students and a few wise elders, in from FBC Prattville, Alabama. We have had them busy with a variety of efforts to serve our community, including spending time in a local nursing home and memory care facility where bingo games and puppet shows abounded, as well as working to clean up local trails that are part of the Whitefish Trail System (i.e. hard labor in the woods in grizzly country). Every community has something that it values and the trails are the currency here. The Whitefish Trail consists of numerous trailheads and many miles of natural surface trail comprised of gated logging roads, scenic overlooks, single-track trails throughout and around Whitefish. The Alabama team will be helping clear a seven-mile stretch of trail, a project that has been untouched as of yet because of the time and energy it will take to take it on. We are so thankful we have such an eager and energetic team here, ready to do this work and build trust and goodwill for Goodwater within our community.

With each team that comes in, Curt invites them to engage in prayer walking throughout Whitefish. As one older gentlemen walked around the schools and the surrounding neighborhood, with tears in his eyes he told Curt that in his 68 years, he has never done anything like this. He spoke of the heaviness that settled upon him as he prayed for the people and for Whitefish. Prayer walking is a way to connect our hearts to the God and his burden for the people in our city. To witness someone from far away experience this same burden was a beautiful reminder that God's heart is for the lost to be saved and for people to experience His love, mercy, kindness, and the freedom and satisfaction found only in Christ.

It's been a joy to see our kids jump in and serve alongside the teams that come in to serve in Whitefish. Our kids may not have a youth group to call their own, but they are learning and growing in countless other ways.



Funding

Goodwater remains financially stable, with two major changes since July 1st: we hired an Executive Pastor and have increased costs for launching services in October. The next six months are crucial as we prepare for the church launch and the initial service period before regular giving begins. We'll share specific needs as we approach the launch, but you can support us now online or by check. Thank you for partnering with us—your support is essential.

Sparkman Family Update

It has been one full year since we arrived. We have now seen the fullness of each season come and go. There is beauty in each. We have spent the past year adjusting to a new culture and community, growing in understanding of the place God has invited us to, and growing deeper roots as individuals and as a family. This spring we have seen connections grow and a big part of that is through our kids. They have jumped into activities and sports and as a result, it has provided opportunity for conversations and the beginning of broader friendships within the community. We are continuing to pray the Lord will go before each of us in our efforts, especially as school looms ahead, including Jude's senior year, Emerson's adjustment to high school, Eli's move to 7th grade (and middle school sports!), and Georgia's promotion to third grade (two school districts, four schools!). We are trying to make the most of the time with the heavy lifting that comes with this stage of life and the task of church planting God has called us to. Please pray we be faithful with all of these precious gifts.

Living in a tourist destination has its perks, including reuniting with old friends from our TCU college ministry days. It was a joy and an encouragement to spend time with the Roberts family and worship with them at Goodwater lake services!



Prayer Support

The Harvest is Plentiful. Bright yellow canola fields blanket the Flathead Valley during summer, much like bluebonnets cover the Texas countryside in spring. It's a beautiful sight. Every time we pass the field, Matthew 9 comes to mind where Jesus spoke of how the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. We continue to pray the Lord will raise up compassionate workers to join us in this church planting effort so that we may play one small part of God's great big plan at work. Will you consider joining us in weekly prayer for Whitefish and for Goodwater Church?

- The Lord will draw the faithful and the curious to be built up by God's word through our weekly services and bible studies;
- For the Palmer family's adjustment to Whitefish;
- Goodwater service launch planning: for a worship leader and kids ministry leaders;
- The Lord will raise up workers for the August football stadium painting project;
- Spiritual hunger and community for our kids.



Thank you for your support and love.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support! We love sharing how God is moving in Whitefish and are grateful to have you on this journey with us. The Lord is at work in the Flathead Valley to show each person how much He loves them, and you are a part of it! Thank you for walking this journey with us. We could not do it without you!

Soli deo gloria,

The Sparkman Family
Church Planters in Whitefish, Montana
Psalm 34:3