



## Following the call

### OP church holds first service Oct. 7

by Jamie Lynn Ferguson

write the author

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OP resident Pastor Jocelyn Thornton has a passion for God, for prayer and for Orland Park. Thornton, who has been involved in ministry for 15 years, led the congregation of Emmanuel Covenant Church in Park Forest, but recently felt called to transplant the church to Orland Park.

On Oct. 7, Emmanuel Covenant Church will hold its first service at 9:30 a.m. in Marcus Theatres at 16350 S. LaGrange Road, Orland Park.



Pastor Jocelyn Thornton

"The church was birthed from a vision that God gave to me for people who don't just want to practice their religion on Sunday, but who want to live out their lives in the presence of God," Thornton explained. "Being in a non-traditional setting like the theatre opens the door for people who may be somewhat intimidated by the traditional church setting."

To preface the opening of the church, Thornton hosted a Bible study at 9:30 a.m. on Fridays at The Original Pancake House at 15256 S. LaGrange Road in Orland Park.

"We are excited about the opportunity to serve the community in this way and we hope that attendance will increase over the next few months," Thornton said.

Thornton added that the church focuses strongly on prayer and reaching people across ethnic barriers.

"I believe prayer is the foundation of everything," she said. "We want to reach all people, as we did in Park Forest, and bring the gospel to anyone who wants to hear it."

The church is still in the process of forming a board of elders and deacon, but they do have an office administrator, Karen Edwards and worship leader, Shawn Cephas.

Cephas, who has worked with Thornton for about a month, said he was drawn to Thornton's passion for God.

"I felt touched by the Lord to join this church," he explained.

Worship will consist of a blend of genres from hymns to contemporary gospel to contemporary Christian.

"God orchestrated everything that's happened so far," Thornton said. "We've met some wonderful people in Orland Park and everybody in the area is encouraging the growth."

For more information on the church or services, please call the church office at (708) 646-4782.

