

Canada: [villagemissions.ca](http://villagemissions.ca) USA: [www.village-missions.org](http://www.village-missions.org)  
**COUNTRY**  
*Matters*

THE STORY OF  
**MAYER**  
ARIZONA

**A NEW FIELD...**  
RENEWED, INSPIRED, AND NOW **ON FIRE!**

  
Village Missions  
Keeping Country Churches Alive



# A View From the Country

with Brian Wechsler, Executive Director

## HELPING HEARTS CATCH FIRE

Across the land people live in rural communities . . . tucked away in fishing villages in the northeast, farm and ranching towns, throughout the heartland and even places where a tree struggles but a cactus does quite nicely.

No matter who the folks are or what the land they call home looks like, this much is for sure: if you aren't from those parts, you probably don't know much about the people or their little town.

They haven't exactly been forgotten. . . there's just very little awareness of places like Mattawamkeag, Maine, Formoso, Kansas or Mayer, Arizona. It isn't exactly that these places and their people have been forgotten . . . they are just not places we know about.

So if a church in one of these communities closes down, it probably doesn't mean anything to people who live 50 or more miles away. But it has a *huge* impact on the people living there. It's like a fire burned down the last church in town!

But I want to talk to you about another kind of fire. It's one I often talk about. And this is a good kind of fire. Each letter in FIRE illustrates what Village Missions is all about.

**F is for new Fields** – places where a church might close without Village Missions' help.

**I is for Investing** – it takes money and people to help supply spiritual leadership for rural places.

**R is for Recruit** – we look for leaders who feel called by God to small communities with us.

**E is for Equipping** – we seek always to equip our leaders and the communities they serve.

In this issue we feature the “F” in FIRE . . . New Fields. Village Missions wants small country churches, on the verge of closing, to ask for our help.

We want the doors of these churches to stay open for the sake of the people in these rural communities.

We want them to discover the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. We want them to follow Jesus. And we want their hearts to be on-fire for God.

It's such a shame when the last gospel-preaching church in a community is gone and becomes nothing more than a landmark that locals use to give directions, "Turn left where the church used to be..."

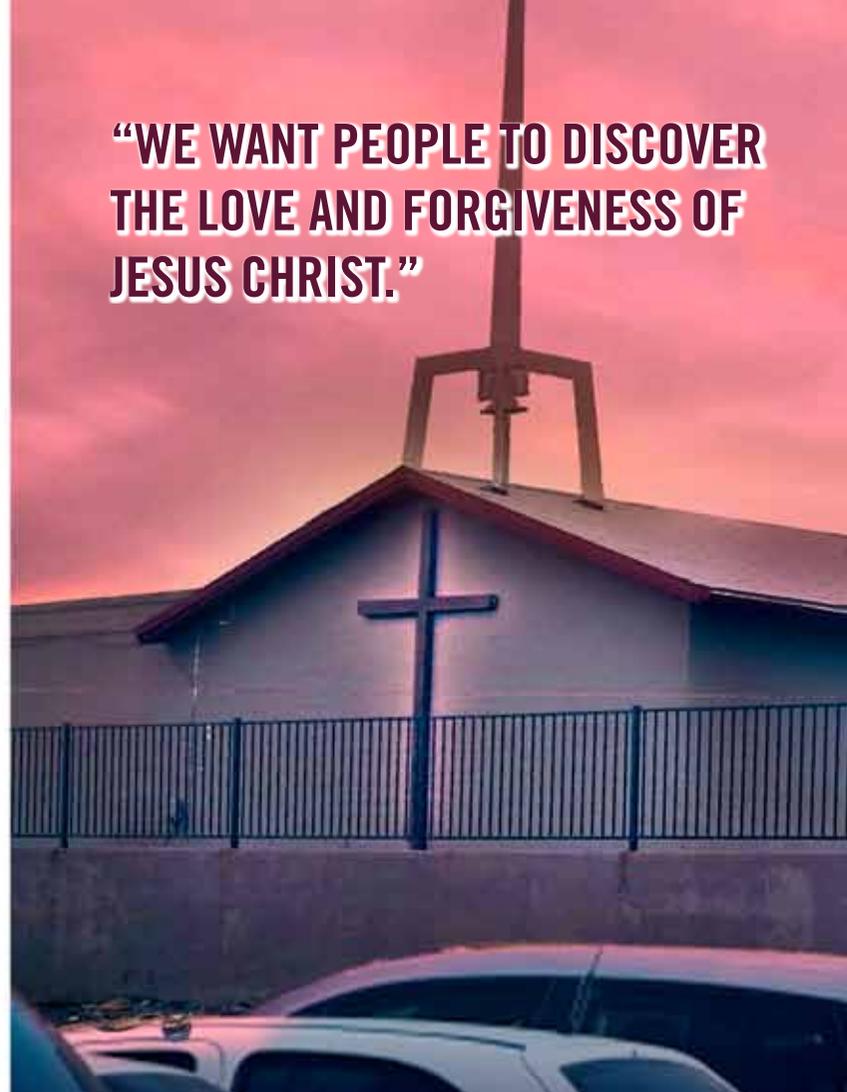
It's a shame because not just the building is empty, but people's hearts are empty.

As you read on, you'll discover what I mean. I want you to hear about a church where the doors are *not* closing any time soon. And Village Missions is honored to be a part of not only keeping this country church alive, but also helping hearts catch fire.

Standing with the country church,



Brian Wechsler  
Executive Director, Village Missions



**“WE WANT PEOPLE TO DISCOVER  
THE LOVE AND FORGIVENESS OF  
JESUS CHRIST.”**

# GOD IS DOING SOMETHING *NEW* IN **MAYER!**

*"I guess we all felt that God wanted a church here."*

A wooden sign with a white background and a dark wood frame. On the left side of the sign is a green cross icon. To the right of the cross, the words "MAYER COMMUNITY CHURCH" are written in a dark red, serif font, stacked in three lines.

MAYER  
COMMUNITY  
CHURCH

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 10:30AM  
10001 S. 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET ▼ 928-632-9533

In Mayer, Arizona, a small, longsuffering group of leaders were doing everything they could to keep the church together. They had been without a full-time pastor for eight long years.

Although there was a passion and commitment to keep the Mayer Community Church open, it was getting exhausting. Resources were limited. They had too little to pay a full-time pastor for their town. Some might have wondered why they continued putting in all the effort to keep it open.

But they faithfully pressed on . . .

*“Sometimes we ask ourselves why we kept it open, because it was a daunting process to keep it going. No one felt led to leave the church, even when there weren’t many of us hanging in there. I guess we all felt that God wanted a church here.”*

Then someone connected them to Village Missions, and everything changed. Today they have a full-time pastor and wife team in the community devoting themselves to the community. This has revived the church and made a world of a difference. Their Village Missions District Representative, Walt Jacoby, shares his perspective...

*“The church has come alive. When we first met with them, attendance was in the twenties. Now that a Village Missionary is there, the church has literally blossomed. Now their*

*attendance is in the forties! The people are filled with joy and bubbling over...”*

But it’s not just an improvement in church attendance that we are seeing at Mayer Community Church. It’s new life that is spilling out into the community, beyond the walls of the church, causing the community to get involved, too!

You may remember Dan and Cheryl Wuthrich from last year’s Country Matters that focused on Candidate School. They are the couple that has been placed at Mayer Community Church. Dan and Cheryl are full of excitement and passion for the community and the amazing things God is doing. Hear what Dan has to say about his time at Mayer so far...

*“Two things have happened since we’ve been here. A true sense of Biblical community is developing in our church, which has been wonderful to watch, and the church is beginning to really consciously look outward.”*

The church is stretching out into the community, which is starting to make an impact. It is making people in the community feel



*Dan and Cheryl Wuthrich*



comfortable going to Dan as “their pastor,” even if they aren’t members of the church.

*“There are four to six people in the community we minister to who consider me their pastor even if they haven’t come to the church. So being full-time, locally present and loving on the people is beginning to make a difference.”*

The women at the church in Mayer are experiencing great things, too. Dan’s wife Cheryl is hosting a women’s Bible study. Some of the women attending even come from neighboring towns that don’t have the resources and studies that Mayer has available right now (having a full-time, local pastor really makes a difference). Cheryl says,

*“There is a lot that can be done in women-to-women relationships. So the pastor’s wife needs to be an active ministry partner in reaching these women. There are eleven total in women’s Bible study. They LOVE the study! It is changing all of our lives. ”*

Clearly the Word of God is becoming more active in the lives of the women at Mayer...and that fire is spreading. She continues...

*“We study the Word and challenge and give opportunities*



*for application, that's what makes the difference. It starts with the Word, knowing what it says, and providing opportunities...and it transforms lives."*

Dan explains how this transforming power of the Word is making a difference in the church and the community. The church is excited about finding ways to reach out into the community, and even people who are not "church-goers" are teaming up with the church and wanting to be involved.

*"Just this last week, a person needed help, which started a cascade of helping, not only within the church, but within the community partnering with the church, all to help this person. When it was done, Cheryl came home and said, "Let me tell you what God did in Mayer today!"*

And new things are happening every day in Mayer -- Bible studies, community service, and even a group exercise class--the church is thriving and growing with their full-time Village Missionaries.

Thank God that His heart for the *New Field* of Mayer is starting a *FIRE* in folks' hearts!





## God's love in small places is a big thing!

God loves every town, tiny or large, and His heart is to see each person there come to Him through Jesus Christ. And He wants a thriving church in each small place that will impact the entire community.

Mayer Community Church is just one example of what God is doing! Just since July we have started serving five new communities! There are many other communities that need this kind of help.

Many fields are waiting today for a Village Missionary couple of their own, a couple God will use to love the people and preach the Word. Thanks for partnering with us to bring communities to life.



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